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## TUGHLUQ SULTANS AND THE CALIPHS

*Sanjay Garg\**

In earlier issues of this journal, I had, on the basis of numismatic evidence, discussed the relationship that the early Turkish Sultans (1206-90) and the Khaljis (1290-1320) maintained with the Caliph, and had argued that the numismatic homage to the Caliph was nothing more than a political compulsion for the Sultans of Delhi.<sup>1</sup>

Continuing the discussion, an account of the Tughluq Sultans of Delhi and their relationship with the house of the Caliph is presented in the following pages.

GHIYAS UD-DIN TUGHLUQ SHAH I (AH720-725/AD 1320-25) clinched the throne of Delhi by putting the Khalji ruler Nasir ud-Din Khusro to death. His line of rulers reigned for over ninety years (AH 720-817/AD 1320-1414). Ghiyas ud-Din was an old and religious man. Though he had the precedent of an earlier Sultan (Qutb ud-Din Mubarak Shah Khalji) assuming the

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<sup>1</sup> Sanjay Garg, 'Early Sultans of Delhi and the Caliphs', *ND*, Vol. 19, (1995), pp. 101-115 and 'Khalji Sultans and the Caliph', *ND*, Vols. 29-30 (2005-2006), pp. 141-49.

Caliphal title for himself, Ghiyas ud-Din Tughluq expressed his contentment in being a 'helper of the Caliph'. As such, his gold and silver coins follow the older practice of declaring the Sultan as *Nasir-i Amir ul-Mominin* (Illus. 1).

At this point, it may be argued as to who was this '*Amir ul-Mominin*' that Ghiyas ud-Din Tughluq was referring to, as by now it was well-known in India that the house of the 'Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad has been annihilated by the Mongols. U.N. Day suggests that Ghiyas ud-Din Tughluq was referring to Quthb ud-Din Mubarak Shah Khalji to whom, as a noble, he proclaimed his loyalty. Day asserts, '... there is no reason to believe that [Ghiyas ud-Din] Tughluq Shah aimed at a non-existing caliph, and not as helper to his master who had been recognised as the caliph.'<sup>2</sup> Whatever the case might be, we have seen that the Sultans of Delhi had used this as well as other Caliphal titles more as a convention rather than their real acknowledgement of the Caliphal authority. In this instance too, the usage of the Caliphal title by Ghiyas ud-Din Tughluq was nothing more than a mere convention.

On certain gold and silver coins dated AH 724-5/ AD 1324-5, issued from Telingana (*Mulk-i Tilang*), Ghiyas ud-Din Tughluq appropriates for himself the title *Al-Mutawakkil 'Ala Allah* (One who trusts in God) alongwith the Caliphal title mentioned above (Illus. 1a).

The billon and copper coins of Ghiyas ud-Din Tughluq are without any Caliphal signatures.

MUHAMMAD BIN TUGHLUQ SHAH (AH 725-52/AD 1324-51) has rightly been called 'the prince of moneyers'. He made

2. U.N. Day, *Some Aspects of Medieval Indian History*, (3rd ed., Delhi, 1973), p. 18.

extensive reforms in the existing currency system. The coins of this Sultan are remarkable in the novelty and variety of their types and are instructive.<sup>3</sup>

The coins of opening years of this reign are inscribed with the names of first four Caliphs. On these coins Muhammad bin Tughluq calls himself *Al-Mujahid fi Sabil Allah* (Warrior in the Path of Allah).

The coinage of Muhammad bin Tughluq in the name of 'Abbasid Caliph was struck during the last decade of his reign (AH 741-51/AD 1340-51). It may be remembered that the direct line of the 'Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad was extinguished by the Mongol leader Halaku Khan, who murdered the last scion of 'Abbasid Caliphate Al-Musta'sim in AH 656/AD 1258. In the chaos that ensued Ahmad, an uncle of Al-Musta'sim, managed to escape to Cairo (Egypt) where Bahri Mamluk Turks had been ruling since AH 648/AD 1250. Baibars I (AH 656-67/AD 1258-65), the ruling king, after confirming the genuineness of Ahmad's descent, installed him as Caliph in AH 659/AD 1261. Thus, after an interregnum of over three years, the 'Abbasid Caliphate was revived in Egypt and the Cairene Caliphate was established.

Muhammad bin Tughluq was confronted with serious challenges to his sovereign authority not only in the form of widespread rebellions but also in the form of condemnation by the religious classes which compromised *Ulemas* (Scholars), the *Qazis* (Judges), the *Khatibs* (Preachers), the *Faqihs* (Jurists), etc.<sup>4</sup>

3. For a detailed study of Muhammad bin Tughluq's coins, see Sanjay Garg, 'Muhammad bin Tughluq: A Numismatic overview of an Enigmatic Persona', in *Power and Communication: Coins in India*, ed. Himanshu Prabha Ray, *Marg*, Vol. 57, No. 3 (March, 2006), pp. 66-75.

4. For a comprehensive account of the rebellions, see Agha Mahdi Hussain, *Tughluq Dynasty*, (Calcutta, 1963), Chapter VIII: 'Rebellions and Disorders', pp. 195-257.



The second half of Muhammad bin Tughluq's reign, from AH 741-52/AD 1340/41-51, was spent in dealing with rebellions 'that grew like dragon's teeth in every direction'.<sup>5</sup> Having discovered that his repressive measures were not successful in curbing the disturbances, he considered counteracting the propaganda of the *Ulemas*, etc. by securing for himself a Caliphal investiture. Recognition of his authority from the 'Abbasid Caliph, who was regarded as the symbol of Sunni creed, was bound to endear him to the masses and thus strengthen his hands against the rebels. Muhammad bin Tughluq, therefore, started his propaganda seeking recognition by the Caliph.<sup>6</sup>

He professed that, 'following the rightful Imam who is the Caliph of the Prophet and acquiring his sanction to act as a ruler seems highly imperative, necessary and essential ... and further that submission to the Imam of the times, even if the distance be as big as that of east and west, is incumbent upon a slave like ourselves ...'.<sup>7</sup> At the same time he also lamented that, 'the sanction or rightful Iman (*Imam-i Barhaq*), which is essential for the attainment of Kingship and which is one of the fundamental principles of the *Shari'at* of Muhammad and the cause of guidance of the followers of Muhammad, became effaced from the hearts of the believers. And it is indisputable that whosoever does not bow his head in prostration before that saintly person (*Imam*) and get his authority, the name of that accursed must be cancelled from the roll of Islam'.<sup>8</sup>

5. Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, 'Muhammad bin Tughluq (1324-51)', in *A Comprehensive History of India*, Volume Five: *The Delhi Sultanat (AD 1206-1526)*, ed. by Mohammad Habib and Khaliq Ahmad Nizami, Peoples Publishing House, New Delhi, 1970, [henceforth CHI], p. 537.

6. Mahdi Hussain (1963), p. 277.

7. Ibid., p. 275.

8. 'Fragmentary Autobiography', of Muhammad bin Tughluq, Eng. trans. by Agha Mahdi Hussain (vide Mahdi Hussain (1963), pp 265-66.

If we were to believe the anonymous author of *Sirat-i Firozshahi*, Muhammad bin Tughluq's new-found faith in the Caliphal sanction for 'the rightful exercise of the political authority' was a result of his extensive study of the religious books.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, a much later chronicle, *Tarikh-i Alfi*, which was compiled at the behest of Emperor Akbar by Maulana Ahmad and several other learned men, informs us that it was Qutlugh Khan, Sultan's teacher, 'who had impressed this fact on his mind'.<sup>10</sup>

Muhammad bin Tughluq made diligent inquiries from the travellers about 'Abbasid Caliph. Whether Muhammad bin Tughluq was aware of the revival of the 'Abbasid Caliphate at Cairo is also debatable. Mahdi Hussain claims that 'he was not sure about the fate of the 'Abbasids (after their destruction by the Mongols)' and also that 'on account of this interregnum and the revolution in the history of the Caliphate that the general ignorance in regard to the Caliphate prevailed on Muslim India'.<sup>11</sup> The view of I.H. Qureshi are similar. He maintains that 'It is doubtful that Delhi even knew that the 'Abbasid Caliphate has been revived in Egypt'.<sup>12</sup> This seems highly improbable. Muhammad bin Tughluq was already having communication with Al-Nasir, the Mamluk Sultan of Egypt, and such important news as the revival of 'Abbasid Caliphate at Cairo must have percolated to him.<sup>13</sup> K.A. Nizami, therefore, appears more nearer to truth when he writes, 'It seems highly improbable, though not impossible, that despite his close diplomatic and cultural contacts with the outside world, the Sultan did not know for decades that

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<sup>13</sup> Nasir ud-Din Muhammad bin Qalawun (b. 1285; d. 1340), commonly known as Al-Nasir, was the 9th Sultan of the Mamluk dynasty of Egypt and a contemporary of Muhammad bin Tughluq. He ascended the throne thrice – first at the age of nine in AH 693/AD 1293; second at the age of 14, in AH 696/AD 1298-99 and third time in AH 709/AD 1309. He died in AH 741/AD 1340. See Mahdi Hussain (1963), pp. 610-11 and p. 611 fn. 2.



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there was an Abbasid Khalifa in Egypt. Perhaps this alleged discovery of the Khalifa was just an explanation for the delayed expression of his faith in the Khilafat'.<sup>14</sup>

In about AH 741/AD 1340 Muhammad bin Tughluq having confirmed the existence of the 'Abbasid Caliphate Al-Mustakfi at Cairo, entered into communication with him and applied for investiture. He cancelled recitation of *Khutbah* and festivities of 'Id pending the receipt of investiture from the Caliph. The Sultan dropped his name and titles from the coin-legend and replaced it with that of the Caliph.<sup>15</sup>

Even before Muhammad bin Tughluq received the reply to his application for the investiture from the 'Abbasid Caliph at Cairo, Amir Ghiyas ud-Din Muhammad, a great grandson of Al-Mustansir Billah, the 'Abbasid Caliph of Baghdad, came to Delhi.<sup>16</sup> Before coming to India he had visited 'Ala ud-Din Tarmashirin, king of Transoxiana, who had appointed him the administrator of *Khanqah* (Monastery) of Qusam bin 'Abbas. Having learnt there about the Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's intense faith and devotion for the house of 'Abbasids, he dispatched his two ambassadors to the court of Delhi. These ambassadors, Muhammad bin Abu al-Sharafi al-Harbavi and Muhammad Hamadani, visited Delhi where Muhammad bin Tughluq greeted them with great honour. He secretly verified the authenticity of Ghiyas ud-Din as the genuine descendent of the 'Abbasids from information brought back by a traveller named Nasir ud-Din Tirmizi, who had met the scion of the house of

'Abbasids in Baghdad. Thus, being convinced, Muhammad bin Tughluq wrote a letter in his own hand requesting Amir Ghiyas ud-Din to come to Delhi. He also dispatched 30,000 dinars to cover his travel expenses.

Ibn Batuta describes at length details of the elaborate arrangements made by Muhammad bin Tughluq to welcome the *Ibn ul-Khalifah* (Son of the Caliph).<sup>17</sup> After loading his guests with all manner of inconsistent honours, Muhammad bin Tughluq even went to the extent of confessing before Amir Ghiyas ud-Din, 'Had I not already promised allegiance (*bai'at*) to Caliph Abu'l 'Abbas (of Egypt), I would have sworn it to you'; to which the Amir replied, 'I too have sworn allegiance to the same Caliph'.<sup>18</sup> Muhammad bin Tughluq, at this juncture, seems to have regretted his hasty adherence to the Cairene Caliph, for in Ghiyas ud-Din he would have secured for himself a submissive Caliph of his own whom he could have used to thwart the *Ulemas'* offensive challenging his authority.

In loading the 'Abbasid pontiff with gifts and honours Sultan Muhammad's bounty surpassed all bounds. He housed his guest in the palace built by Qutb ud-Din Mubarak Shah at *Dar-ul Khilafah* Siri, which he furnished with all kind of luxuries including utensils of gold and silver and a bath tub made of gold. Apart from numerous pages, servants and slave girls, thirty mules with gold saddles were also gifted to the 'honoured' guest. For the customary *Sar-Shusti* (head wash) alone, four lakh dinars were paid.<sup>19</sup> The entire city of Siri, including the royal lands with its houses and gardens, plus one hundred villages and the eastern dependencies of Delhi were all assigned to the *Ibn-ul Khalifah*.

14. K.A. Nizami (1970), p. 537.

15. Zia ud-Din Barani, *Tarikh-i Firozshahi*, in *History of India as told by its own Historians*, by H.M. Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p.249; Mahdi Hussain (1963), p. 259.

16. Full name - Amir Ghiyas ud-Din Muhammad ibn abd al-Qahir ibn Yusuf ibn abd al-Qadir ibn al-Mustansir Bi'llah; Ibn Batuta mentions him as the *Ibn al-Khalifah* (Son of the Caliph) while Barani calls him *Makhdum zada* (Son of the Master) as is also called Muhammad bin Tughluq.

17. *The Rehla of Ibn Batuta (India, Maldives Islands and Ceylon)* (hereafter *Rehla*), trans. and commentary by Agha Mahdi Hussain, Baroda, 1976, p. 72-3.

18. *Ibid.*, p.73.

19. *Ibid.*



Further, an allowance of three hundred *dinars* a day was fixed to meet his daily expenditures.<sup>20</sup> Whenever Amir Ghiyas ud-Din visited Sultan, the latter used to descend from the throne, and if seated on chair, he used to stand before him. Orders were issued to all big and small *Amirs* (Nobles), to bow before Amir Ghiyas ud-Din as they bowed before the Sultan. Ibn Batuta during his stay in Delhi, witnessed the arrival of Wazir from Bengal, who after performing his normal protocol duties at the royal court, was ordered by Sultan to 'go to *Makhdum Zadah's* house' to pay his respect.<sup>21</sup>

This windfall of wealth and honour filled Amir Ghiyas ud-Din with unsurmisable vanity and stinginess. Ibn Batuta records an anecdote, wherein Behram Shah, the Ghorid king of Ghazni, visited Delhi. By the orders of Sultan Muhammad he was temporarily lodged at a house in the city of Siri which had already been assigned to Amir Ghiyas ud-Din. Enraged by old enmity towards the king of Ghazna, Amir Ghiyas ud-Din considered the lodgings of Bahram Shah at Siri as a personal insult. He prepared to leave the kingdom of Sultan Muhammad. The Sultan, however, achieved a rapprochement by extending his heartfelt apologies and asking *Ibn ul-Khalifah* to forgive him by 'placing his foot on his neck'.<sup>22</sup> In another incidence recorded by Ibn Batuta after his return to Baghdad, the pitiable condition of the son of Amir Ghiyas ud-Din is narrated. While Amir Ghiyas ud-Din was dwelling in the luxurious at Delhi his son received only a dirham per day as the prayer leader (*Imam*) at a mosque.<sup>23</sup>

The Sultan, had by now, became restless due to delay in the arrival of investiture. He therefore appointed Sheikh Rajab al-

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., p. 74.

22. Ibid., p. 75.

23. Ibid., pp. 75-6.

Burq'ai to be his special envoy to the Caliph.<sup>24</sup> 'Through him he sent for the Caliph gifts, one of which was a ruby stone worth fifty thousand dinars, and he wrote to the Caliph asking for the letter of investiture appointing him his deputy in Hind and Sind'.<sup>25</sup> This was his second application to procure an investiture from the Caliph.

Meanwhile, the results of his first application bore fruits when, in the year AH 744/AD 1343, Haji Sa'id Sarsari, arrived in Delhi with long awaited pontifical recognition from the Caliph Al-Hakim II (AH 741-53/AD 1340-53). He brought for Sultan the letter mandate (*Manshur*) conferring on Muhammad bin Tughluq the title of *Nasir-i Amir ul-Mominin*; the Caliphal insignia (*Liva*) and the robe of honour (*Khil'at*). The contemporary chronicles are full of details of the servile humility shown by the Sultan at this occasion.<sup>26</sup>

While festivities for the arrival of the Caliphal investiture were going on in Delhi, Haji Rajab al-Burq'ai, Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq's special envoy to the court of Caliph, was still trying hard to fulfil his mission by securing an investiture for his Sultan. Perhaps he did not know that his mission was no longer necessary since Muhammad bin Tughluq had already received a Caliphal investiture at the hands of Haji Sa'id Sarsari. The Caliph declined to accede to this request for the grant of the investiture to the Sultan Muhammad, probably because he had already sent

24. Haji Rajab al-Burq'ai was a native of Krim (Qrim) in the Qipchaq plains and one of the leading Sufis of the time (*Rehla*, p. 244). Barani, in a contradictory statement, says that Haji Rajab al-Burq'ai was sent to the Caliph's court (in Egypt) after the arrival of Haji Sa'id Sarsari with the Caliphal investiture in AH 744/AD 1343, carrying with him 'a letter acknowledging his (Sultan's) subordination to the Khalifa....' Barani, op. cit., pp. 249-50; See also *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 165. However, Ibn Batuta is quite unequivocal in mentioning that Haji Rajab al-Burq'ai was sent to the Caliph as a special envoy of the Sultan 'before Sheikh Sa'id's arrival' (*Rehla*, p. 244).

25. *Rehla*, Appendix A: Caliph's Letter of Investiture, pp. 244.

26. Ibid., pp. 243-5; Barani, op. cit., p. 250.



one through Haji Sa'id Sarsari. Ultimately, through the efforts of his brother Amir Saif ud-Din al-Kashif, who was an influential noble in the Mamluk court at Cairo, Haji Rajab was able to convince the Mamluk king Salih Isma'il, son of the king Al-Nasir Salih Isma'il, who, on behalf of the Caliph, sent Rukn ud-Din al-'Ajami, the *Sheikh us-Shuyukh* (Chief Sheikh) of Egypt to the Indian Emperor along with the desired letter of investiture declaring Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq as Caliph's deputy in the country of Hind and Sind (*ma yaliha* literally 'the adjoining territories').<sup>27</sup>

Haji Sa'id Sarsari stayed in Delhi for a month.<sup>28</sup> Laden with Sultan's gifts and presents for Caliph, the envoy arrived at Cambay (Khambayat) and halted there until he could arrange for his voyage. Meanwhile, Haji Rajab al-Burq'ai accompanied by Rukn ud-Din arrived at Cambay where Haji Sa'id was still camping.<sup>29</sup> On his arrival Haji Rajab was very upset to see that the fruits of his labour as an official envoy to the court of Caliph had already been consummated by Haji Sa'id Sarsari. He, therefore, decided to meet the Chief of Cambay, Maqbul Telinga.

27. *Rehla*, pp. 244-5.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 244.

29. Badr-i Chach in a chronogram gives Rajab 745/ December 1344 as the date of arrival of Caliphal investiture.

بم بتاریخی که مه بر سال بفسدشد فزون  
زین سفر ماه محرم سابق شعبان رسید

Badr-i Chach, *Diwan-i Badr-i Chach*, Manuscript. Fort William College Collection, in National Archives of India, Acc. No. 161, f.9.

According to this and the copy of the *Diwan* of Badr Chach that is available in the Khuda Baksh Oriental Public Library, Patna, the word for the month used in this couplet is *māh*, (مه) the numerical value of which, according to the Abjad system, add up to 45 (viz. *mim* = 40 + *he* = 5). This, when added to the word *hafsad* (بفسد), or 700, gives us the date as 745. See Maulana Abdul Muqtadir, *Catalogue of the Arabic and Persian Manuscripts in the Oriental Public Library, Bankipore, Vol. 1: Persian Poets, Firdausi to Hafiz*, (Calcutta, 1908), p.211. However, on the copy of this work available in the British Library, Dr. Rieu has read the word as *māh* which gives the date as AH 746. In this connection it may be noted that *māh* is more suitable for the metre of the hemistich rather than *māh*. Some other copies of this work also read this word as *neh*, which is absurd. For the different interpretations of this date, see Elliot and Dowson, Vol. III, p. 568 (fn).

He informed the officer that 'verily Sheikh Sa'id has duped you and the robes which he has presented he has purchased at Aden'. He further requested the Chief to siege Haji Sa'id and send him to the emperor.<sup>30</sup>

Maqbul Telinga was well aware of the great honour and esteem the emperor held for Haji Sa'id. He, therefore, sent Haji Sa'id, *Sheikh-us-Shuyukh* Rukn ud-Din and Haji Rajab al-Burq'ai to the emperor, along with his report in this matter. The emperor, however, felt annoyed with Haji Rajab al-Burq'ai because in spite of his knowledge of the warm reception the emperor had extended to Sheikh Sa'id, he had talked about this matter in the public. The emperor, therefore, refused to see Haji Rajab al-Burq'ai and accorded still greater honour to Sheikh Sa'id.<sup>31</sup>

However, Sheikh Rukn ud-Din who had been formally appointed by the Mamluk Sultan of Cairo to carry the letter of investiture for the Sultan of Delhi, was greeted with great esteem and honour. Muhammad bin Tughluq gifted him rich presents including 'hoofs for the horses' feet as well as nails – all these being of pure gold'.<sup>32</sup> While Sheikh Rukn ud-Din returned to Egypt, Haji Sa'id Sarsari remained in Delhi enjoying royal patronage, at least till AH 748/ AD 1347.<sup>33</sup>

After the arrival of the Caliph's investiture, the name of Al-Hakim II was ordered to be inscribed on the coins so much so as to exclude the Sultan's own name from coin inscriptions.

The series of Muhammad bin Tughluq's Caliphal coinage can, thus, conveniently be divided into two categories:

30. *Rehla*, p. 245.

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*, p. 69.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 245.



- (a) Coins struck in the name of Al-Mustakfi (AH 741-4/AD 1340-4)  
 (b) Coins struck in the name of Al-Hakim II (AH 748-52/AD 1347-51)

The coins in the name of Caliph Al-Mustakfi were actually struck 'in anticipation' of the Caliphal recognition. These coins are known for the years AH 741-4/AD 1340-4, in spite of the fact that Al-Mustakfi had died in AH 740/AD 1339 and had been succeeded by Caliph Al-Wathiq I (AH 740/AD 1339).<sup>34</sup> These coins were issued in gold, billon and copper (*Illus. 2, 2a, 2b*). No silver issues are known. The only silver issue in the entire Caliphal coinage series is in the name of Al-Mustakfi which is obviously from a gold die (*Illus. 2d*).

The earliest dated coin in the name of Al-Hakim II is in AH 748/AD 1347. Thus there is a mysterious gap in dates from AH 744-7/AD 1344-47. No dated specimen in the name of the Caliph Al-Hakim II is recorded for this period. However, on a certain series of coin in gold as well as billon, numerals 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 have been observed on the reverse. According to Nelson Wright, these numerals 'represent the units of the year 744 to 748'.<sup>35</sup> In AH 744/AD 1344 Muhammad bin Tughluq received a patent of Caliphal recognition of his authority from Al-Hakim II. The name of the dead Caliph Al-Mustakfi was, henceforth, replaced on the coin by Al-Hakim II. Before the specimens with full dates were issued in AH 748/AD 1344-9, the years might have been represented by their unit digits, thus filling the gap between AH 744-8/AD 1344-9 in the Caliphal coinage. Thus AH 744 is represented by 4, 745 by 5, 746 by 6, 747 by 7 and 748 by 8 (*Illus. 2e*), (*Illus. 2f*), (*Illus. 2g*), (*Illus. 2h*).

34. Coins struck from Daulatabad continued up to AH 745/AD 1344-45.

35. H. Nelson Wright, *The Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, (Delhi, 1936), pp. 168-9.

Muhammad bin Tughluq died on 21 Muharram 752 (22 March 1351) near Thatta without leaving any male issue. Kamal ud-Din Firoz, the son of his younger brother Malik Rajab had been nominated the heir to the throne of Delhi. But taking advantage of his absence from the capital (Delhi) a group of nobles led by Khwaja-i Jahan raised a so-called son of the late Sultan to claim the Sultanate of Delhi.

GHIYAS UD-DIN MAHMUD BIN MUHAMMAD SHAH (AH 752/AD 1351) as this pretender Sultan was designated on his coins, had probably the shortest reign (if that could be called 'reign' at all) amongst the Sultans of Delhi. The name of this Ghiyas ud-Din is not to be confused with the son of Fath Khan, who succeeded Firoz Shah on the throne of Delhi in AH 790/AD 1388. Coins dated AH 752/AD 1351 in gold and silver have survived to bear the testimony of his accession to the throne. On these coins the Sultan bears the Caliphal title of *Yamin-i Amir ul-Mominin* (Right hand of the Commander of Faithful i.e. the Caliph) (*Illus. 3*).

Earlier a title very similar to this namely, *Yamin ul-Khilafah* (Right hand of the Caliph) had been adopted on coins by Iltutmish and by 'Ala ud-Din Khalji. This is, however, probably a case of adopting a unique Caliphal title that indicates a closer relationship with the Caliph as a futile attempt to emphasise the authenticity of his claim to the Sultanate.

FIROZ SHAH TUGHLUQ (AH 752-90/AD 1351-88), the nephew of Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, finally succeeded to the throne of Delhi. In fact his somewhat doubtful claim to kingship was supported by none other than Shaikh us-Shuyukh Misri and Makhdumzadah Ghiyas ud-Din.<sup>36</sup> Firoz Shah continued

36. Muhammad Bihamed Khani, *Tarikh-i Muhammadi*, in Saiyed Athar Abbas Rizwi, *Tughluq Kalin Bharat*, II (in Hindi) (Aligarh, 1957), p. 221.



to pay numismatic homage to the 'Abbasid Caliphs. Broadly his coinage falls into two distinct groups viz.

- (a) With the name /*Kunyat* of the Caliphs, and
- (b) Without the name/*Kunyat* of the Caliphs.

In the first group name/*Kunyat* of Al-Hakim II and Al-Mu'tasid (AH 753-63/AD 1353/62) appear (**Illus. 4**).

Coins continued to be struck in the name of Al-Hakim II though no dated specimens are known. On Id uz-Zuha, 756/ December 1355, Firoz Shah received the robe of honour with the patent of investiture and the title of *Saiyad us-Salatin* (Leader of the Kings) from the 'Abbasid Caliph Al-Mu'tasid, who had succeeded Al-Hakim II in AH 753/AD 1353.<sup>37</sup> Henceforth, the name of the new Caliph was substituted on coins of Firoz Shah. The earliest coin in the name of the Al-Mu'tasid is a gold *tankah* on which Thomas read the date as AH 757.<sup>38</sup> On these coins Firoz calls himself as *Saif-i Amir ul-Mominin* (The Sword of Commander of the Faithful). (**Illus. 4a**). The coins in the name of this Caliph continued to be struck till AH 765/AD 1363-4, even though the Caliph had died in AH 763/AD 1362. The slow percolation of the news of the Caliph's death into India could be cited as a reason of this numismatic discrepancy.

Al-Mutawakkil I (AH 763-85/AD 1362/85) succeeded Al-Mu'tasid as Caliph. The earliest appearance of his name on

37. Yahya bin Ahmad Sirhindi, *Tarikh-i Mubarak Shahi*, quoted in Rizwi (1957), p. 199. Barani mentions that during his six years rule, Firoz Shah received twice the Caliphal letter patent (*manshur*), the robe (*khil'at*) and the standard (*tiva*). See Zia ud-Din Barani, *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, in Rizwi (1957), p. 46. Afif, mentions that these investitures were sent by the Caliph even without a formal application by Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq. Shams-i Siraz Afif, *Tarikh-i Firoz Shahi*, in Rizwi (1957), p. 115. However, neither Barani nor Afif record the date of receipt of the Caliphal investiture.

38. Edward Thomas, *The Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, (London, 1871), p. 274.

Firoz's coins is in AH 766/AD 1364-65. Besides gold coins, some silver *tankahs* bearing the name of this Caliph are also known (**Illus. 4b**).

In AH 785/AD 1384 Firoz put an end to the practice of inscribing his name on the coins, replacing it with the titles *Nasir-i Amir ul-Mominin*.

Billon coins of Firoz Shah are also issued in the name of the Caliph. His earliest billon coin is a dateless specimen bearing the *Kunyat* of Al-Hakim II (**Illus. 4c**).

It was a general practice of the coinage of Firoz Shah Tughluq and the later Tughluq Sultans to use the *Kunyats* of the Caliphs on the coins:

- (a) *Ahmad Abu'l Abbas* for Al-Hakim II
- (b) *Abu'l Fath* for Al-Mu'tasid and
- (c) *Abu-Abdullah* for Al-Mutawakkil I

The only exception to the above practice is a dateless gold *tankah* ascribed to Firoz Shah Tughluq that bears full name of Caliph Al-Mu'tasid – *Abu'l Fath Mu'tasid Billah* (**Illus. 4d**).

On these coins, Firoz Shah has not used any title for himself.

FATH KHAN (d. AH 778/AD 1376) was in AH 760/AD 1358 invested by his father Firoz Shah with insignia of royalty and was assigned the 'territories of the East' (*Iqlim us-Sharq*). He was further allowed to cause his name to be inscribed on the coins along with that of his father. Coins bearing the name of Fath Khan are known in gold and silver. These are issued in the name of the Caliphs Al-Mu'tasid and Al-Mutawakkil, where the latter is represented by his *Kunyat* (*Abu Abdullah*) (**Illus. 5**), (**Illus. 5a**), (**Illus. 5b**), (**Illus. 5c**).



GHIYAS UD-DIN TUGHLUQ SHAH II (AH 790-1/AD 1388-9) was a son of Fath Khan. He succeeded Firoz Shah as the Sultan of Delhi, and ruled for a brief span of six and a half months. Then he was assassinated.

The coins of this Sultan are known in gold, billon and copper. The gold, billon and copper coins bear the *Kunyat* of Al-Mutawakkil (*Abu Abdullah*) (Illus. 6). A few billon coins of Delhi mint are without the name or *Kunyat* of any particular Caliph; instead they bear the legend *Al-Khalifah Amir ul-Mominin* (the Caliph, Commander of the Faithful) (Illus. 6a). On some other billon coins of this Sultan, the old title *Na'ib-i Amir ul-Mominin* was used (Illus. 6b).

FIROZ SHAH ZAFAR (AH 791/AD 1389), was a younger brother of Fath Khan. His coins are the sole testimony of his existence. As his coins show, he probably succeeded Ghiyas ud-Din Tughlaq II and ruled only for a few months.

Zafar issued coins in gold and billon in the name of Al-Mutawakkil using his *Kunyat* (*Abu Abdullah*) (Illus. 7). On his certain billon coins he also calls himself *Na'ib-i Amir ul-Mominin* (Lieutenant of the Commander of the Faithful) (Illus. 7a). A few billon coins of this Sultan bear the general Caliphal titles (Illus. 7b). The copper coins of this Sultan do not bear any Caliphal signature.

ABU BAKR SHAH (AH 791-3/AD 1389-90) succeeded his father, Firoz Shah Zafar on the throne of Delhi. On his gold and silver coins he retained the coinage pattern of his father including the same Caliphal titles for himself. Thus he uses the *Kunyat* of Al-Mutawakkil (*Abu Abdullah*), on his gold and billon coins (Illus. 8). On certain other billon coins he calls himself *Na'ib* of the Caliph (Illus. 8a), or uses the titles

*Al-Khalifah Amir ul-Mominin Khalladat Khilafatahu* (the Caliph, Commander of the Faithful, May his Caliphate be perpetuated) (Illus. 8b). The copper coins of this Sultan are also without the name/titles of the Caliph.

FIROZ SHAH BIN ABU BAKR (AH 792/AD 1390), son of Abu Bakr Shah, is an otherwise unrecorded personality of Tughluq dynasty.<sup>39</sup> However, a few billon coins in which he is distinctly mentioned as *Firoz Shah bin Abu Bakr Shah* (Firoz Shah, the son of Abu Bakr Shah) prove his existence. His coins are in billon and all of them are dated AH 792/AD 1389/90. This period apparently falls within the reign of his father Abu Bakr Shah, who retained his throne till Muharram AH 793 (December 1390). H.N. Wright suggests that the news of the coronation of a rival claimant to the throne in the person of Mahmud son of Firoz Shah, in Ramzan, 792 AH (August 1390) must have incited this prince to stake his own claim on the throne and hence the existence of his *sikka*s.

The coins of this Sultan bear the Caliphal legends of the pre-existing coinage. Thus, one of the types of his coins bears the *Kunyat* of the Caliph Al-Mutawakkil (*Abu Abdullah*) along with the words *Khalladat Khilafatahu* (Illus. 9). On others, he calls himself *Na'ib-i Amir ul-Mominin* (Lieutenant of the Commander of the Faithful) (Illus. 9a), whereas yet other coin-type bears the Caliphal titles *Al-Khalifah Amir ul-Mominin* (the Caliph, Commander of the Faithful) along with the religious invocation *Khalladat Khilafatahu* (May his Caliphate be perpetuated) (Illus. 9b).

NĀSIR UD-DIN MUHAMMAD SHAH BIN FIROZ SHAH (AH 792-95/AD 1390-93) was a son of Firoz Shah Tughluq and the brother of Fath Khan and Firoz Shah Zafar. During the last month of his reign, Firoz Shah, who had become old and infirm,

<sup>39</sup> Nelson Wright (1936), p. 226.



had practically handed over the reins of the government of his son Muhammad. Besides the name of his son, Firoz also caused the name of his grandson Sikandar to be included in the *Khutbah*. Thus it was in AH 789/AD 1387, that Muhammad bin Firoz had the first taste of sovereignty.

The coinage of this Sultan can conveniently be divided into two phases:

- (a) As Regent, AH 789-90/AD 1387-8
- (b) As Sultan, AH 792-5/AD 1390-93

In the first phase, Muhammad had the reins of sovereignty while his father was still alive. No gold or silver coins of this period are known. Only billon coins are extant. On these coins Muhammad has inscribed the *Kunyat* of Al-Mutawakkil (*Abu Abdullah*) and he calls himself as *Na'ib* (Lieutenant) of the Caliph (Illus. 10). His copper issues are without Caliphal name/titles.

After the death of Firoz Shah in AH 790/AD 1388, Tughluq Shah II succeeded to the throne and Muhammad was forced to retire to Nagarkot. After the death of the Tughluq Shah II, Muhammad reasserted his claim over the throne and participated in the war of succession that followed. However, fortune sided with Abu Bakr Shah who eventually succeeded to the throne of Delhi. In desperation Muhammad crowned himself at Samana in AH 791/AD 1389. In Ramzan AH 792 (August 1390 AD) he was successful in recapturing Delhi and he was then crowned as the Sultan of Delhi.

In the second phase, we find gold coins as well as silver *tankahs*, being issued in the name of the Caliph. They are without the name of *Kunyat* of any particular Caliph and use the Caliphal

invocation *Fi-Zaman al-Imam Amir ul-Mominin Khalladat Khalafatahu* ((Issued) in the reign of the Imam, Commander of the Faithful, May his Caliphate be perpetuated). (Illus. 10a). The billon issues follow the pattern of his earlier phase and use the *Kunyat* of Caliph Al-Mutawakkil (Illus. 10b). On certain billon coins, in place of the *Kunyat*, a generalized Caliphal title *al-Khalifah Amir ul-Mominin Khalladat Khalafatahu* is used (Illus. 10c). Another Caliphal title – *Na'ib-i Amir ul-Mominin* (Lieutenant of the Commander of the Faithful) appears on the copper issues (Illus. 10d).

Humayun Khan, second son of Muhammad Shah assumed the title 'ALAUDDIN SIKANDAR SHAH I (AH 795/AD 1393) and succeeded his father. He ruled for a brief span of forty-five days. Billon coins were issued bearing the *Kunyat* of Al-Mutawakkil (*Abu Abdullah*) (Illus. 11). Some other issues depict a form of generalised Caliphal titles: *Al-Khalifah Amir ul-Mominin* (the Caliph, Commander of the Faithful)<sup>40</sup>. The use of the title of the *Na'ib* of the Caliph as introduced by his father on copper issues was also continued (Illus. 11a).

NĀSIR UD-DIN MAHMUD SHAH (AH 795-815/AD 1393-1413) was the youngest son of Muhammad Shah and a brother of 'Ala ud-Din Sikandar Shah. He had a reign full of ups and downs. In AH 797/AD 1395 his authority as a sovereign ruler was challenged by a rival claimant Nusrat Shah, son of Fath Khan. The year AH 801/AD 1398 saw Timur's invasion and the sack of Delhi. After Timur had left the scene, Mallu Iqbal Khan, a powerful noble became *de jure* ruler of Delhi. Mahmud Shah, who had retired to Qannauj after Timur's invasion, was only able to return to Delhi after the death of Iqbal Khan in AH 808/AD 1405/6? Mahmud Shah II died in AH 815/AD 1413.

40. Nelson Wright (1936), p. 208, Coin no. 845A.



The coins of Mahmud Shah are known in all four metals: Gold, silver, billon and copper. For coins of each metal either the Caliphal invocation or the *Kunyat* of the Caliph Al-Mutawakkil were used. Thus, on gold and silver issues he adopted the title of *Abu al-Muzaffar* (Father of Victory) or *Abu al-Muhamid* (Father of the Laudable Qualities) for himself and uses the Caliphal invocation *Fi-Zaman al-Imam Amir ul-Mominin Khalid al-Khilafatahu*.<sup>41</sup> (Illus. 12).

On billon coins he uses Abu Abdullah – the *Kunyat* Caliph Al-Mutawakkil (Illus. 12a), while on copper issues he followed the Caliphal legend of the pre-existing coinage by calling himself *Na'ib* (Lieutenant) of the Commander of the Faithful (Illus. 12b) (Illus. 12c).

NĀSIR UD-DIN NUSRAT SHAH (AH 797-802/AD 1395-1399) was a son of Fath Khan. In AH 797/AD 1395 he was raised to the throne at Firozabad by a noble named Sad'at Khan. In about AH 802/AD 1406 he occupied Delhi but can not be traced in the annals of history of Delhi Sultanate after that year.

The coins of Nusrat Shah are known in only two metals: gold and copper. From the point of view of the legends, his gold issues, though extremely scarce, are very interesting. Without using the name or *Kunyat* of any particular Caliph, he adopted the 'Abbasid title *Al-Wathiq* (the Confiding One) by phrasing it with rest of the legend *Al-Wathiq be ta'id al-Rahmani* (Confiding in the Divine Help) (Illus. 13).

The copper coins of this last scion of the Tughluq dynasty follow the pre-existing pattern and the Caliphal title of the *Na'ib* was used (Illus. 13a).

41. The title *Al-Wathiq* was not new. Barani associates this title with Sultan Firoz Shah Tughluq and calls him *Al-Sultan al-Asr wa al-Zaman al-Wathiq be Nusrat al-Rehman* (King of the Times and of the World, Confiding in the Divine Help). Zia ud-Din Barani, *Tarikh-i Firozshahi*, in Rizwi (1957), p.1.

### Conclusion

In the entire lineage of the Tughluq Sultans of Delhi, two names prominently stand out in relation to their acts of acknowledging the Caliphal supremacy. Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq and Firoz Shah Tughluq – both received investitures proclaiming them the 'deputies' of the 'Abbasid Caliph at Cairo. The contemporary chronicles as well as their coins bear ample testimony to the fact of the symbolic Caliphal over-lordship over the Sultans of Delhi. However, it can be convincingly argued, as has also been contended by Ernst in his recent study, that for Muhammad bin Tughluq the 'the nominal 'Abbasid caliph was a counter-measure against the resistance of the 'ulema to his policies ....'<sup>42</sup> According to K.A. Nizami, Muhammad bin Tughluq's subterfuge of securing a Caliphal investiture 'was the last weapon in his armoury which he could use against the rebel crowd...'<sup>43</sup> Firoz Shah too aimed to secure this sort of 'religious respectability', which was thoroughly in consonance with his abolition of the non-*shari'at* practices at court and his energetic sponsorship of the study of Islamic law.<sup>44</sup> Ernst has also argued that apart from 'satisfying the religious classes in their own domains', these acts of seeking Caliphal sanction to their authority were also masqueraded as a challenge to the Mongol conviction of world sovereignty.<sup>45</sup> It may be remembered that after terminating the 'Abbasid rule from Baghdad in 1258, the Mongols eyed the newly established Sultanate of Delhi and the danger of Mongol threat continued throughout the Tughluq period. Finally, 'it was Chingiz Khan's putative descendent Timur (Tamerlane) who finally gave the *coup de grace* to the tottering Tughluq dynasty when he sacked Delhi in 1398.'<sup>46</sup>

42. Carl W. Ernst, *The Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center*, (State University of New York (SUNY) Series in Muslim Spirituality in South Asia), (State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 56.

43. K.A. Nizami (1970), p. 538.

44. Ernst (1992).

45. Ibid.

46. Ibid.



The concept of a commonwealth based on a common religion and with a central Caliphate to provide global leadership did have a romantic appeal but it was the political nicety that often determined the nature of this relationship. Otherwise, why would the Caliph who had 'assigned' the territories of Hind and Sind to the Tughluq Sultans of Delhi, issue letter patents (*manshurs*) to the rebel of the Deccan and to the contemporary Sultans of Bengal, whose numismatic allegiance to the Caliph is on record.<sup>47</sup> About the effect of Caliphal investiture, we get a similar account for the reign of Firoz Shah Tughluq, as we have noticed earlier in the *qasids* of Badr Chach for the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq. Barani records that due to Firoz Shah's patronage and promotion of faith (*dinparwari* and *dinpanahi*), the fear of revolt in his kingdom has completely been removed.<sup>48</sup> Since the formal recognition of the Sultan's authority by the Caliph added dignity to their sovereigns, the Sultans continued to seek Caliphal sanction and pay numismatic homage to a distant religious head.

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2.	Illus. 1a	Ghiyas ud-Din Tughluq Shah I	D 303 (AV)
3.	Illus. 2	Muhammad bin Tughluq	D 425 (AV)
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47. Sanjay Garg (2006), see 'Rebel Issues', pp. 70-72.

48. Barani in Rizwi (1957), p. 47.

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7



7a



7b



8



8a



8b



9



9a



9b



10



10a



10b



10c



10d



11



11a



12



12a



12b



12c



13



13a

